

From: Michael Schwartz
To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: Microsoft Settlement

I was completely aghast when I recently went to several major retail stores (Office Depot, Best Buy, Staples among others) looking to purchase a laptop computer. Every laptop came bundled with Windows XP. Having read about security issues in Windows XP, I asked each store if I could get a laptop bundled with a different operating system. In particular, I asked about Linux and even Windows 2000 as alternate possibilities to Windows XP. In each case, I was told that it was not possible.

I suspect that I could have simply purchased Linux separately in the hope that there would be drivers available for the hardware in the laptop, but this is often not the case and I likely would have had to spend a great deal more money to replace existing hardware which would be compatible to Linux.

The bottom line here is that I had no choice at all. On December 21, 2001, I purchased a laptop bundled with Windows XP and installed Windows 2000 on it to have a dual boot system. Some of the hardware is new enough that there are no Windows 2000 drivers for it. In fact, there are several devices that Windows 2000 does not recognize at all and I am unable to identify them.

This is a serious problem for consumers. Microsoft's monopoly must be stopped. Not only do I have no choice regarding other vendors' operating systems, I also have no choice regarding which Microsoft operating system I want to use. I was forced to use Windows XP.

Thank you for your consideration.

Michael Schwartz